(c) whether computer facilities are made available in the Passport offices in all the States particularly in Rajasthan; and

(d) if not, whether there is any proposal to this effect, if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) The average number of Applications for passports submitted per day in Jaipur Passport Office in Rajasthan during the period 1-4-92 to 28-4-92 is 503.

(b) The average number of passports issued per day during the same period is 743.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) It is proposed to install computers in seven passport offices during the current Financial year.

Applications for visiting Pakistan on Pilgrimage

1647. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of Indians who visited Pakistan for pilgrimage during the period 1989—92, year-wise;

(b) what is the number of applications that are presently pending with the Government for visiting Hindu Shrine Katas Raj in Pakistan; and

(c) what steps are being taken to send these pilgrims at the earliest to the shrines ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Under the Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines signed between India and Pakistan in 1974, approximately 8300 Indians visit Pakistan for pilgrimages every year.

(b) and (c) Government have received an application for a visit by 150 persons to Sri Katasraj. Action has been taken to process this application.

U.N. Secretary-General's offer for resolving Kashmir Issue

1648. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a newsitem that appeared in the 'Hindustan Times' of 27th April, 1992 under the caption "Ghali ready to assist on Kashmir" wherein it has been stated that United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali has offered to assist in any manner that might help resolve the Kashmir issue; and

(b) if so, Government reaction thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government does not seek any UN assistance in this regard.

Exploring Areas of Cooperation between SAARC Countries

1649. SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to explore areas of cooperation between SAARC countries and ASEAN countries;

(b) if so, the details therof;

(c) whether any proposals have been put up by India before the SAARC countries in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (d) India has been of the view that proposals in regard to cooperation between SAARC and other regional and international organisations should stem from SAARC itself.

At the Fifth SAARC summit held in November, 1990, the SAARC Secretariat was authorised to share information and exchange reports etc. with the Secretaries

of the European Community (EC) and of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Following the decisions taken at the Colombo summit held in December, 1991, the Special Session of Foreign Secretaries held last April considered the question of cooperation between SAARC and other regional and international organisations and decided, *inter alia*, to recommend to the Council of Ministers that its chairman may hold informal consultations with representatives of ASEAN, EC and of Asia Development Bank with a view to exploring the possibilities of a relationship of mutually beneficial cooperation with them.

Once this recommendation is approved by the Council of Ministers in coming July, it is expected that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers will hold consultations and, thereafter submit its report, with recommendations, to the Seventh SAARC Summit scheduled to be held in Dhaka later this year.

Cuba's Request to Security Council

1650. SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Cuba in a letter to U.N. Security Council has demanded handing over of two U.S. citizens who allegedly masterminded the blowing up of its aircraft on 6th October, 1977; and

(b) if so, what India as a Member of Security Council propose to do with the complaint?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir. In a letter to the Security Council President, Cuba has demanded handing over of two persons, who according to the communication, "are currently under the protection of the U.S. Government".

(b) Full details and legal documents in this regard are yet to be made available only after which the Government could consider its position.

Arms purchased by South Asian Countries

1651. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details available with Government regarding expenditure incurred by South Asian countries on arms purchase and arms research and nuclear weapons;

(b) what is the manner in which the enhanced expenditure on arms by South Asian countries will affect the interest of India; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government in the light of these developments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. (*See* below).

(b) and (c) Government constantly monitor all developments having a bearing on India's security environment and take necessary steps to safeguard India's security.

Statement

According to reports, Pakistan's Defence Budget increased 7-fold in the period 1978—91 from Pakistani Rs. 1016 crores to over Rs. 7100 crores. The revised estimates for the year 1991-92 placed the Pakistani Defence Budget at Rs. 7600 crores. In 1992-93 the Pakistani Defence Budget is placed in the range of Rs. 8500 crores to Rs. 9200 crores. This defence allocation accounts for 38% of Pakistan's current budget outlay.

Sri Lanka Government's defence expenditure at Sri Lankan Rupees 1540 crores approximating to Indian Rupees 1000 crores for 1992 is estimated to be 10% of their 1992 budget.

Maldives defence expenditure for 1992 at MRF 117 million approximating Rupees 30.79 crores is 8% of the 1992 Maldives Budget.

According to the Nepalese budget document presented in their Parliament on